



I N F O R M A T I O N S H E E T

WHAT'S IN A NAME & LOGO?

'Sticks and stones will break your bones but names will never hurt you.'

This old saying might console a teased child or deflect a cruel taunt but, unfortunately, it isn't entirely true. Names can hurt. This pain is nowhere felt more than by those who have a disability. Disability support services, if they realise it, are pivotal in reversing this wounding experience.

Words, appearance, associations and activities, the main contributors to imagery, have the power to heavily influence what we like and want and what we dislike and avoid. Just consider, for a moment, the persuasive power of imagery in advertising. Youth and beauty, for example, are used to attract us to many products.

In a social context, imagery affects how we judge, accept and support each other.

Disability support services send out an endless stream of messages, via the elements of imagery, which influence how others think about the people they support.

Messages that influence the identity of the people who use our service are conveyed in a variety of different ways.

The homes we help create - their location, appearance and the neighbourhood they share - all send important messages to the rest of the community about the people who live in them.

All of our homes are located in valuable and popular residential areas. They are well kept and surrounded by neighbourhoods of rich and varied family life. This tells others that the people who live here have no differences that should preclude them from living like other citizens of the town.

The old adage of being 'judged by the company we keep,' or more accurately for the people we support, the company they are forced to keep, also sends strong messages to others. Gathering people in large institutions has certainly diminished, but we still group people in shared homes on little other than their common experience of disability. This potentially sends a message that these people need to be together because they might be difficult to live with. As we know, this is not necessarily so.

Although our control over shared home arrangements is limited by Government policy we can offset this impression with other messages.



Over the years we have gathered a workforce of skilled, well-known and respected people from our local communities who show a deep interest and commitment to the people they support. This association with valued, discerning people sends out positive messages about the people we support.

Some of our support workers are genuine life-sharers who invite the people they support to join them in their family life including having them stay over. This display of acceptance tells others that they can be included in the intimacies and richness of family life.

Staff rosters should encourage and support normal lifestyles. Keeping the routines and rhythms of the day the same as those of other adults in the community illustrates to others that age and lifestyle choices need to be recognised and taken seriously.

How others hear us talk to and about the people we support sends strong messages that will either attract or repel interest and acceptance. If we can help those being supported to present their gifts and talents, acceptance and friendship are more likely to follow.

When we have the responsibility for the choices that make up a person's presentation and appearance, we control how others will react to and think about them.

NWRSS does not publicly appeal for funds because we want to send a strong message that these people have entitlements to secure, comfortable and interesting lives which, like our own, should not depend on the whims of charity.

Last but not least, we have the language and names we use to describe our service. Do they send attractive or repellent messages?

This edition of our information sheet reaffirms our name and launches our first logo with due consideration to the messages that will be sent.

Too often these days, image precedes performance and reputation. Names, logos and mottos are empty promises rather than reminders of hard won trust and integrity.

During our fifteen year history we have been invited to serve in every city and town along the North West Coast. We think this demonstrates that we have earned our stripes.

Since our inception in 1991, we have been known as North West Residential Support Services.

A random survey asking people what they thought of our name drew the following observations:

Most people felt that it clearly stated our location and the nature of the service but some, not familiar with support services, felt there was not quite enough information.

There were some comments about its length – the time it took to say and write it. Neither the spoken and written abbreviation of 'North West Res,' nor the acronym NWRSS raised damaging connotations.

'It sounds serious,' was another common comment. The political and business worlds may be awash with clichés and jargon but it is important that we maintain clear definitions and a tone of seriousness in relation to the people we support.

There is a history behind our choice of naming words. *Accommodation Support Services* was the initial government label for services such as ours, but we always felt it hollow and limited. Accommodation has a temporary ring and little hint of community. On the other hand, 'residential' brings to mind the idea of a home with overtones of community and permanency. 'Residential' was consciously chosen over 'accommodation.'

We have decided to retain our name and accept the abbreviations.

Our motto, 'Helping People Create Homes,' with nearly as long a life as our name, arose out of the frustration of only being seen as a provider of houses. The motto was created to challenge this limited view and squarely define our responsibility as home creation.

So, with our name and motto firmly established we approached a graphic design company with the following brief for a logo:

- Retain the name and reflect its accuracy and seriousness.
- Retain the motto and reflect the concept of 'home.'
- Use strong and distinct universal symbols and imagery.
- Represent the people who help create the 'homes.'
- Show welcome, warmth and emotion in subtle ways.
- Show a connection to the community.
- Don't use stylised human forms or any reference to disability.
- Don't use any imagery that will stigmatise or devalue the people being supported.
- Make it easily adaptable to letterhead, covers, disc labels, presentations and a website.

The universal symbol for a house or shelter was used as the foundation image.



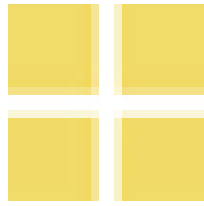
To represent the people who help turn houses into homes the symbol for the house was embraced with a pair of hands



As an old saying goes, 'Hands create houses, hearts create homes.' The subtle hint of a heart at the base of the house gave us another of the impressions we wanted. The heart imagery reinforces the importance we place on helping support workers develop strong emotional connections with the people they serve by discovering their gifts and, in particular, their heart qualities.

It is hard to do other than your best for people you have come to like.

In days gone by the glow of a fire through a window was a sign of warmth and welcome. Today we leave a light on to send this message.



By adding the lighted window we now have a home with signs of warmth and welcome.



To complete the logo, the images are combined with our name and motto.



**NORTH WEST
RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT SERVICES INC.**

Helping People Create Homes

A 'follower' was designed to depict our quest to include the people we support in local community life.



In combination these images will be used in a variety of ways on

letterheads, publication covers, DVD labels and a website. Yes, we are now building a website.

www.nwrss.org.au

This is your website. Opinions and suggestions are most welcome.

Hopefully, we have created a graphic identity that sends out positive messages. This is always of paramount importance when sending messages that can define the identity of others.

Imagery is, of course, just a small beginning in addressing a number of important themes that influence the identity and acceptance of the people we support.

Future Information Sheets will look at:

- Basing a service on sound beliefs.
- Challenging everyone with high expectations.
- Aiming for the best rather than the average.
- Recognising development as a life long process.
- The advantages of teaching by imitation.
- The importance of joining the community.

